

SALISBURY BEACH DUNE WALKOVER ACCESS DESIGN STANDARDS

(Modified) May 2, 2007

The intent of these standards is to provide a means of balancing the need for beach access with protecting the Coastal Dunes, which in turn will help to maintain the dune's function of storm damage protection and flood control. These design standards will be used as part of the Wetlands Protection Act permitting process and wetland enforcement cases by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and as part of a permit approval process by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for granting access to the State Beach. In addition, the Salisbury Conservation Commission will be informed of these standards and will be encouraged to follow them for wetland permitting and enforcement projects. These design standards are to be used for new access, as well as substantially reconstructed/substantially damaged walkways or where it has been determined that access has been placed or constructed in violation of the Wetlands Protection Act. MassDEP and DCR agree to work cooperatively in following these design standards.

General Design Standards

1. Wherever possible, existing public access maintained by the State or the Town of Salisbury shall be preferred over private access. Therefore, the preferred access to the beach will be via the public access for properties that directly abut or are adjacent to these access ways.
2. Wherever possible, common or shared access servicing multiple properties will be encouraged.
3. Site conditions will help identify if an elevated boardwalk is preferred over an at-grade access. This will be determined upon the size of the dune and the slope of the seaward dune face. Dunes that are relatively small in height and that have a gradual seaward dune face may be suitable for an at-grade access. If the site is suitable for an at-grade access it shall be no wider than 36 inches and the alignment shall be well marked. The direction or approach of the at-grade access will be determined based upon site conditions. Generally the approach should be to the southeast at a 45-degree angle to the shore.
4. Where site conditions require an elevated boardwalk the following standards shall be employed:
 - a. The height from the dune surface (sand) to the lowest horizontal part of the boardwalk (excluding piles or other vertical supports) shall be a minimum of 18 inches for retrofitted boardwalks and a minimum of 24 inches for new boardwalks or as high as it is wide, whichever is appropriate. No skirts, lattice or similar trim components will be allowed. The design height above the dune shall also consider the height of the surrounding dune.
 - b. The maximum width of the boardwalk shall be 36 inches.
 - c. All boardwalk decking shall have a minimum of one inch spacing.

- d. The boardwalk shall be designed to allow modifications as the dune grows in height and width.
- e. The boardwalk shall be designed with removable or breakaway sections, especially for those areas where the boardwalk or stairs from the boardwalk are located on the most seaward face of the dune or on the beach.
- f. The approach or direction of the boardwalk from the private property to the beach will be determined based upon site conditions.
- g. No risers will be allowed on stairs.
- h. Vertical supports shall be pilings or posts that are driven and are not to be encased in concrete or other footings. No heavy equipment or machinery shall be used to install the vertical supports.
- i. Vertical supports are not to be installed in dune slopes that are steeper than 30 degrees.
- j. Any portion of the boardwalk or stairs that are removed on a seasonal basis shall not be stored on DCR property or on any portion of a vegetated dune. Storage is recommended to be on portions of the boardwalk that are not removed.

Review Process

Requests for access to the beach from private property may occur as a result of a permitting action or enforcement action. It is recommended that DCR should be involved in the review of the access as soon as possible. DCR will provide assistance regarding the type of access (at-grade or elevated) and the direction of the approach to the beach.

Before an Order of Conditions has been issued or an enforcement document has been finalized DCR should be notified. When a Notice of Intent is filed with the Conservation Commission and MassDEP, proof must be provided that requests for review will be made to the DCR Salisbury Beach Reservation. For enforcement actions MassDEP will provide a written explanation of the proposed access and how the access helps to protect the coastal resources and whether the access will interfere with public access to or on the beach. DCR has offered that they will develop a checklist to track the approval process within their agency.

Besides these general design standards there is a need to include requirements for proper maintenance to make sure the structure does not become a nuisance or obstruction on the beach, review requirements for substantial improvements or modifications (but no review for routine maintenance of the approved existing boardwalk). This can be included as part of the DCR review and approval process.